

Washington, D.C. –Congressman Charlie Wilson (OH-6) joined House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (MD-5) and more than 100 other Members of Congress in pressuring the President to delay final action on all auto dealership closings until the White House Auto Task Force is able to reexamine the proposed consolidation plan.

“I’m concerned that there hasn’t been enough transparency in these rapid fire decisions that will close roughly 2,000 prominent General Motors and Chrysler automobile dealerships,” Wilson said.

Wilson and other Members of Congress seek clarification as to how and why certain dealerships were targeted for shut-down.

A copy of the letter the Members of Congress sent today is included below:

June 8, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

We are writing to express our concerns about General Motors’ and Chrysler’s decision to close profitable automobile dealerships across the country, and urge you to ask GM and Chrysler to delay final action on proposed closures pending further review of the decision to consolidate dealerships and the process by which Chrysler and GM selected the dealerships to close.

Closing these dealerships will put over 100,000 jobs at risk at a time when our country is shedding jobs at an alarming rate. We also question the criteria being used to determine which dealerships should be closed and the fundamental fairness involved in this effort. It is our view that the market should make these decisions rather than leaving it up to the manufacturers whose poor leadership contributed to their demise. Furthermore, we believe car dealers will be

key players in any effort to revive the American auto industry.

We believe the dealerships are one of the auto industry's key sources of strength and the manufacturers should continue to honor their agreements and contracts. The dealerships, and their more than 1 million employees, form personal relationships with customers that often contribute to brand loyalty and will be key to General Motors' and Chrysler's recovery following this economic downturn. While we understand the desire to reduce the number of unprofitable dealerships, no one has yet sufficiently explained the need to close profitable dealerships.

We recognize that efforts by your Auto Task Force prevented the total liquidation of General Motors and Chrysler, as well as their dealership networks. We commend your efforts to help these businesses survive these challenging economic times. However, we are concerned that manufacturers are closing profitable dealerships to circumvent current contracts which could require expensive buy-outs under normal conditions. We are also concerned about allegations that dealers that have previously stood up for their rights against the manufacturers are being targeted by these closures. We believe that the forced closures of profitable dealerships needs to be scrutinized by the Task Force to prevent additional future financial losses to General Motors and Chrysler and job losses across the United States.

We may consider legislative proposals to ensure that dealers and their employees are treated fairly, and we look forward to your timely response.

cc: The Honorable Timothy F. Geithner, The Honorable Hilda L. Solis, Director Lawrence H. Summers